

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 05136 072232Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /059 W
-----093502 072235Z /72

R 071439Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 914
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AAMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 2882
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5136

USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, PINR, ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: MINISTER OF LABOR RELATIONS
JIMENEZ DE PARGA

1. SOMETHING OF A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE IN CATALONIA,
48-YEAR OLD MANUEL JIMENEZ DE PARGA Y CABRERA SHOULD
INJECT SOME MUCH-NEEDED DYNAMISM INTO THE MINISTRY OF
LABOR. WITH THE DISAPPEARAHCE OF THE FRANCO-EAR SYNDICAL
RELATIONS PORTFOLIO, A REORGANIZED MINISTRY OF LABOR
RELATIONS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FULL SCOPE OF LABOR
REFOR, TRADE UNIONISM, AND CRITICAL LABOR-MANAGEMENT
RELATIONS QUESTIONS (INCLUDING AN INPUT INTO ANY "SOCIAL
PACT" NEGOTIATIONS ON WAGE-PRICE RESTRAINTS).

2. JIMENEZ DE PARGA WAS BORN IN GRANADA, APRIL 9, 1929.
AFTER STUDYING LAW IN GRANADA, HE MOVED TO MADRID IN 1951
WHERE HE RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE IN 1953. HE WAS SUCCESSIVELY
NAMED PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY AND PROFESSOR OF
POLITICAL LAW, AND IN 1957 MOVED TO CATALONIA TO JOIN
THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA. FOREIGN
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STUDIES INCLUDED STAYS AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF HEIDELBERG,
FRIGOURG, MUNICH AND PARIS. IN ADDITION TO SERVING AS
DEAN OF THE LAW SCHOOL AND TEMPORARILY (NOVEMBER 1976 ATO
EARLY 1977) HEADING THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA, JIMENEZ
DE PARGA ALSO HAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE.
FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS HE HAS WRITTEN FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS
BARCELONA NEWSPAPER LA VANGUARDIA, AND MORE RECENTLY HAS

HAD A SYNDICATED COLUMN APPEARING IN 15 NEWSPAPERS. HE WENT TO THE U.S. ON A LEADER GRANT IN 1964. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS SEVEN CHILDREN.

3. INTELLECTUALLY BRILLIANT, HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING EGOCENTRIC. OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN BARCELONA NOTES THAT HE IS A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE. UNPOPULAR WITH CATALAN NATIONALISTS, AND CERTAINLY NOT A TRULY CATALAN SPOKESMAN IN THE CABINET. UNLIKE OTHER OUTSIDERS WHO MOVED TO CATALONIA AND BECAME ALMOST MORE CATALAN THAN THE CATALANS, JIMENEZ DE PARGA DID NOT. NOW THAT SUAREZ HAS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO GRANT CATALONIA (AND OTHER REGIONS) A CERTAIN DEGREE OF AUTOMONY (TO BE DEFINED BY THE NEW CORTES), THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR RELATIONS MAY DEVELOP A NEW OUTLOOK ON REGIONAL MATTERS. AT ALL EVENTS, LONG IDENTIFIED WITH THE POLITICAL "OPPOSITION", HE WILL NOW BE IN A POSITION TO PROMOTE SOME OF THE DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN LABOR THAT HE HAS BEEN CALLING FOR.

4. IN COMPANY WITH A NUMBER OF FORMER "OPPOSITION" LEADERS, JIMENEZ DE PARGA HAS BEEN CRITICAL IN THE PAST OF THE U.S. AS A YOUNG VISITOR IN 1964, HE APPARENTLY TOOK THE U.S. TO TASK FOR ITS POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR FRANCO. AS LATE AS SEPTEMBER 1976, HE MADE IT A POINT TO TELL AN EMBOFF THAT THE U.S. HAD A "BAD IMAGE" IN SPAIN BECAUSE - IN HIS VIEW - WE HAD NOT COME OUT STRONGLY ENOUGH IN FAVOR OF THE EMERGING

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DEMOCRATIC FORCES. AND YET, NOTING IN THE SAME CONVERSATION THAT THE THE THEN DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION TRADE UNIONS LACKED MACHINERY AND ORGANIZING ABILITY, HE DECLARED THAT "U.S. LABOR MUST HELP" THE STRUGGLING FREE TRADE UNIONS, AS MUST THEIR EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FRIENDS. IT WOULD BE WORTH THE POLITICAL RISKS, INVOLVED, HE SAID, IF SPAIN'S FRIEDNS DID NOT WANT TO SEE THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM DIE STILLBORN. ON THE BASIS OF SUCH REMARKS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE NEW LABOR RELATIONS MINISTER WOULD PERSONALLY NOT LOOK ASKANCE AT FRATERNAL AMERICAN TRADE UNION ASSISTANCE TO THE SPANISH FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

5. IN SOME INITIAL COMMENTS JULY 5, FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT, JIMENEZ DE PARGA PINPOINTED UNEMPLOYMENT AND "REGIONAL IMMIGRATION" AS URGENT PROBLEMS, HE CONSIDERED HIS "CONFLICTIVE" MINISTRY A KEY ELEMENT IN THE NEEDED RE-STRUCTURING OF SPANISH SOCIETY. CURRENT LABOR LEGISLATION WAS "OUTDATED" AND HE BELIEVED NEW LABOR LAWS MUST BE TIED CLOSELY TO THE NEW CONSTITUTION. FINALLY, HE INDICATED HE WISHED TO MAINTAIN VERY CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE NEW SPANISH TRADE UNION LEADERS. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, LABOR RELATIONS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID05136
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770242-0107
Format: TEL
From: MADRID USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770783/aaaacugq.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b162a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1939439
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: MINISTER OF LABOR RELATIONS JIMENEZ DE PARGA
TAGS: PINT, PINR, ELAB, SP, (JIMENEZ DE PARGA, MANUEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b162a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009